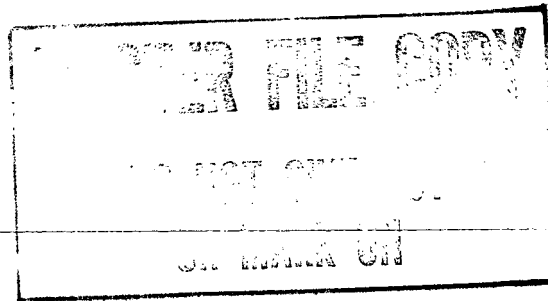




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# Mitterrand and the Communists: Strains in the Coalition

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An Intelligence Assessment

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EUR 82-10163  
December 1982

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# Mitterrand and the Communists: Strains in the Coalition

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**An Intelligence Assessment**

This assessment was prepared by [redacted]  
Office of European Analysis. Comments and queries  
are welcome and may be directed to the Chief,  
Western Europe Division, EURA [redacted]

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This paper has been coordinated with the  
Directorate of Operations and the National  
Intelligence Council. [redacted]

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*EUR 82-10163  
December 1982*

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### Mitterrand and the Communists:

#### Strains in the Coalition

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#### Key Judgments

*Information available  
as of 27 December 1982  
was used in this report.*

We believe President Mitterrand's decision in June 1981 to appoint four Communist ministers did not fundamentally alter the historic and often bitter rivalry between Socialists and Communists for leadership of the French left. Mitterrand evidently saw the coalition as a means of consolidating Socialist dominance within the left and of warding off attacks from the French Communist Party (PCF).

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The Communists, on the other hand, apparently judged that cooperation would improve their ability to compete with the Socialists.

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The Communists have demonstrated some ability to influence domestic policy, particularly during the first year of the Mitterrand administration. For example, Communist ministers have used their positions to favor the interests of the Communist-controlled labor federation. The Socialists, however, generally have overruled the Communists when key issues were at stake. The government's shift last June toward economic belt tightening demonstrated the limits of Communist influence.

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Communist ministers have placed Communists on their personal staffs and, in some instances, to key posts within their ministries. Communist participation in government is likely to yield dividends to the PCF in future years—whether or not it remains in the coalition—because of some institutional reforms engineered in the past 18 months.

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We judge that the Communists have had little or no success in influencing French foreign policy under Mitterrand. Indeed, his controversial decision to appoint Communist ministers probably reinforced his inclination to take a firm stand on key East-West political and security issues, thus demonstrating both to France's allies and to the anti-Communist majority of the French electorate that any deal with the generally pro-Soviet PCF would not involve concessions on foreign policy.

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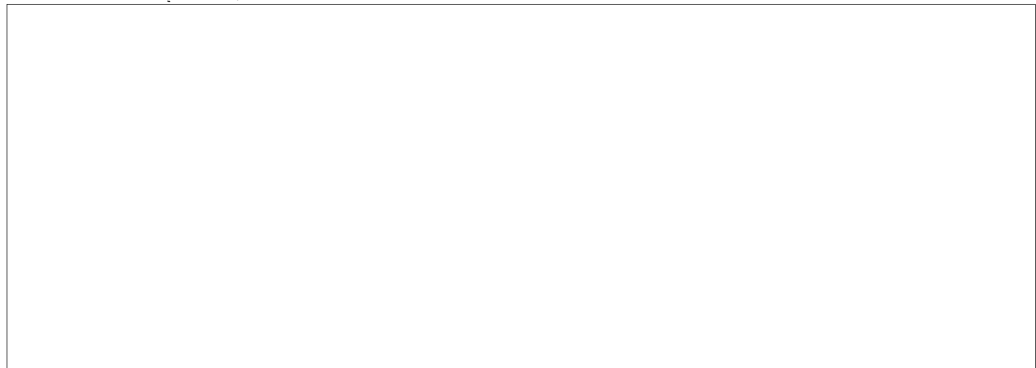
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Contrary to Marchais' expectations, participation in the government evidently has weakened further Communist electoral strength and worsened the PCF's internal divisions. The Communists' grip on important municipal administrations probably will be significantly loosened in municipal elections next March because of continuing intense rivalry with the Socialists. 


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The Mitterrand government's shift to more restrictive economic policies, which began last June, will continue to pose serious difficulties for the Communist leadership and strengthen the hand of those party officials opposed to staying in the coalition much longer. Although the coalition almost certainly will not break up before the municipal elections, we judge its prospects for survival thereafter as bleak. 

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The coalition's demise probably would not result in drastic changes in the Mitterrand government's domestic and foreign policies. Although the PCF's departure from the government would afford Mitterrand some additional room for maneuver toward the center, he would try to avoid the appearance of sacrificing leftist principles in what some of his supporters would view as a "deal" with the right. 

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## Mitterrand and the Communists: Strains in the Coalition

### Origins of an Uneasy Coalition

When President Mitterrand appointed four Communist ministers, he did not fundamentally alter the historic and often bitter rivalry between French Socialists and the French Communist Party (PCF) for leadership of the French left.<sup>1</sup> The rivalry dates back to the Congress of Tours in 1920, when the left split over the question of accepting Soviet leadership of the international workers' movement. The majority, caught up in the mystique of the Russian Revolution, opted for establishment of the French Communist Party. The minority faction chose to remain loyal to the French Section of the International Workers' Movement (SFIO), the predecessor to today's Socialist Party (PS).

The bitterness engendered by the split continues to shape the relationship between the two parties. There have been periods of limited cooperation—notably the Popular Front government of 1936-37, the wartime collaboration against the Nazis, and the electoral alliance originally established in 1972 and partly resurrected in 1981. More often, however, the relationship has been one of intense rivalry.

The failure of occasional efforts to unify the left during the 1960s and 1970s had the effect of fueling mutual suspicions. For example, many Socialists publicly blamed Communist attacks on them—after Mitterrand had rejected Communist demands to revise the “common program” signed in 1972—for the failure of the left to win control of the National Assembly in 1978.

Mitterrand's appointment of Communists to Cabinet posts is no indication that past differences have been overcome. To the contrary, US Embassy reporting,

<sup>1</sup> The four Communist ministers are Minister of Transport Charles Fiterman, Minister of Health Jack Ralite, Minister Delegate for Civil Service and Administrative Reforms Anicet Le Pors, and Minister Delegate for Vocational Training Marcel Rigout. Back-



Francois Mitterrand

and press accounts indicate that both parties view their current alliance largely as a marriage of convenience in which each is trying to improve its strength and tactical position at the expense of the other.

Mitterrand has openly avowed his intention of expanding the influence of his brand of “liberating Socialism” at the expense of the advocates of “Marxism-Leninism.” Press accounts, statements by Socialist leaders to US Embassy officials, suggest that Mitterrand continues to view his appointment of the Communists primarily as a means of convincing the more than

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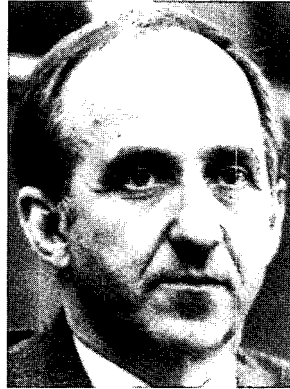
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Georges Marchais



Charles Fiterman



Anicet Le Pors



Jack Ralite

Pictorial Parade ©

Pictorial Parade ©

United Press ©

4 million Communist voters who made his victory possible that the Socialist Party, and not the PCF, is the true champion of a united left

In our view, Mitterrand also had in mind several tactical considerations. These include his desire to buy a measure of labor peace from the Communist-controlled General Confederation of Labor (CGT), to keep the PCF on a short leash with an electoral alliance through the critical municipal elections in 1983, and to exacerbate perceived divisions among PCF leaders over what role the party should play vis-a-vis the government. In other words, we believe Mitterrand sees the alliance essentially as a means of undermining the PCF and confirming the Socialist Party's predominance.

Communist entry into government was to:

- Enhance the sagging prestige and weakening cohesion of the PCF.
- Help the PCF to recover its pre-1981 voting strength.
- Open doors for Communist infiltration of governmental machinery.
- Increase Communist influence over domestic policy.
- Promote PCF foreign policy objectives.

In our judgment, the Communists have made some progress toward infiltrating governmental machinery

and enhancing their influence in domestic policy but have gained little or nothing relative to the remaining three goals.

#### Qualified Success in Domestic Policy

The Communists have gained some influence over domestic issues. Although the Socialists' absolute majority in the National Assembly prevents the PCF from forcing concessions from Mitterrand, the Communists have been able to play on his commitment to leftist unity, reinforcing his inclination to implement rapidly many of his campaign promises of broad-ranging economic and social measures. The Communists have also gained some leverage through their control of the powerful labor federation, the CGT. This puts them in a position to barter labor peace for concessions on the domestic policy front. In our judgment, though, the Communists have been unable to affect the essential thrust of Socialist policies.

Communist influence on Socialist policies has been most evident outside the legislative arena. For example, according to press reports, Mitterrand's decision in early 1982 not to accompany a government-decreed reduction in the workweek with a corresponding reduction in wages reflected the President's desire to appease the CGT. The CGT had strongly criticized the government's earlier failure to adopt a 38-hour

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Marcel Rigout



Pierre Mauroy

workweek—it opted for 39 hours—and its decision to put off a promised phased reduction to 35 hours.

Communist ministers have used their administrative authority to favor CGT interests. According to a report published last January by a leading non-Communist union, Transport Minister Fiterman obtained amnesty and pension rights for CGT militants dismissed since 1947 by the state-owned railways. Administrative Reforms Minister Le Pors successfully pushed repeal of a ban on political activities inside public buildings.

US Embassy reports indicate that over the past spring and summer Socialist officials acquiesced in CGT strong-arm tactics in labor disputes with major privately owned automobile manufacturers, but Socialist officials recently have become less tolerant. For example, Labor Minister Auroux, whose mediation efforts in early September were widely viewed as being partial to the CGT, blocked a CGT effort later that month to force the automobile manufacturers to violate the government-decreed wage freeze. Still, we believe the government's vacillation probably has resulted in a significant net gain of CGT influence in this key economic sector. The US Embassy reports, for example, that despite the CGT's minority position (in terms of overall union representation) in the private automobile manufacturing firms, it demonstrated its ability to shut down large portions of the industry for extended periods of time.

The Socialists, however, generally have overruled the Communists when key issues have been at stake. According to press reports, Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy last January brushed aside Communist complaints and complied with a directive from the conservative-dominated Constitutional Council—France's "supreme court"—to increase government compensation for private shareholders in newly nationalized firms. The Communists also were overruled in April when the government decided to increase workers' contributions to social security funds, to water down provisions of a new "wealth tax," to offer new investment incentives to small and medium-sized enterprises, and to shelve parts of draft legislation on labor-management relations advocated by the CGT.<sup>2</sup> On the politically sensitive issue of reform of the state-supervised radio and television administrations, the Socialists last May rejected most of the PCF's major objections to Mauroy's proposals, provoking a Communist decision to abstain in the National Assembly vote on the reform legislation.

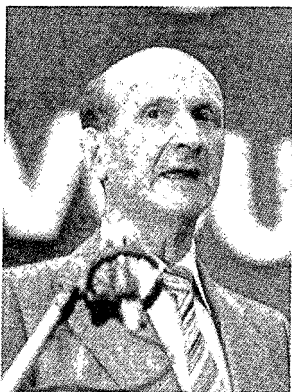
The government's abrupt shift in June toward a significantly less expansionist economic policy demonstrated the limits of Communist influence on major domestic issues. The thrust of the government's policy changes—including a four-month freeze on most prices and wages and cutbacks in promised social expenditures—represented, in our view, a rejection of veiled warnings by Communist leaders that the Mitterrand government was not moving fast enough or far enough on the domestic economic and social fronts. The Communists suffered a further loss in July when Mitterrand, in line with his promise to reduce planned expenditures in the deficit-ridden social security and unemployment insurance funds, named one of his top aides—an avowed advocate of a stern line

<sup>2</sup> The Mitterrand government last October dropped another key proposal, strongly backed by the PCF and CGT, from labor reform legislation. The proposal would have authorized political organization activities in the workplace. Non-Communist union leaders apparently convinced top Socialist officials that such a proposal would eventually confer one-sided advantages to their Communist rivals.

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Henri Krasucki

vis-a-vis the PCF—as Social Affairs Minister. According to US Embassy and press reports, the previous incumbent was a leftwing Socialist whose pro-CGT sympathies had earned her a reputation, within both Socialist and opposition circles, as the “fifth Communist minister.”

The political rift within the coalition became apparent when Marchais and CGT leader Henri Krasucki, evidently hoping to capitalize on the negative reaction to the austerity measures within the PCF and CGT rank and file, openly denounced the wage freeze and offered only lukewarm support for most of the remaining government measures. Although Communist deputies subsequently joined the Socialists to defeat a no-confidence resolution in the National Assembly, Communist senators refused to support the implementing legislation for the austerity program.

Communist party and labor leaders recently have stepped up public criticism of the government's new restrictive economic measures. For example, Communist parliamentary leader Lajoinie in early October publicly denounced a long list of Socialist moves, concluding that the government's actions testified to its willingness to “compromise with the right.” In the same vein, one CGT official—also a member of the PCF Politbureau—pointedly warned the Socialists that their refusal to guarantee the purchasing power of all workers raised fundamental questions about their “political credibility.”

Although Marchais and the Communist ministers recently have reaffirmed their intention to stay in the coalition, Marchais and other PCF officials have been increasingly careful to suggest that they are junior partners who cannot be held responsible for all government actions. According to press accounts, top PS officials have been angered by the Communist effort to dissociate themselves from necessary but unpopular measures.

#### Improved Foothold in Governmental Machinery

The appointment of Communist ministers has opened the way for more PCF members to enter the government and the administrations of some state-run enterprises.<sup>3</sup> Communist ministers—like their non-Communist colleagues and predecessors—have used patronage opportunities to name members of their own party to their personal staffs and, in some instances, to key posts within their ministries. Communists have been named to head the Paris Transit Authority and the nationalized coal company.

Communist officials have been able to bring party members into some lower ranking jobs—particularly in the health and transport sectors—by favoring applicants from Communist-controlled municipalities.

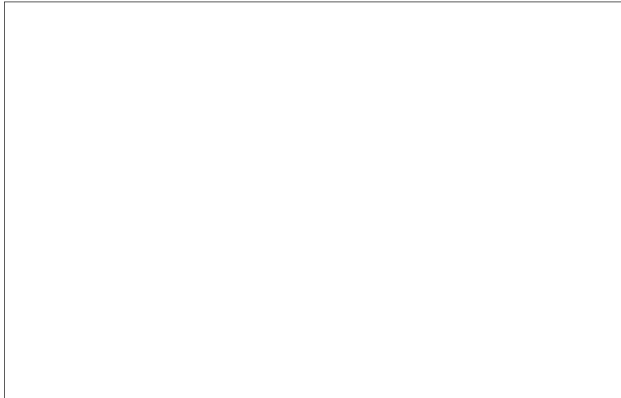
We believe Communist participation in the government has improved the PCF's access to information about the functioning of governmental machinery.

<sup>3</sup> The presence of Communists in the French Government is not a new phenomenon. Known PCF members were not excluded under the Fourth and Fifth Republics from most civil service posts, although in practice they were kept out of intelligence and defense jobs.

there were still Communists in the bureaucracy as a result of Communist participation in de Gaulle's postwar Cabinet in 1945-46. The Communists were dismissed from the government by Prime Minister Ramadier in May 1947. Minister Delegate for Civil Services and Administrative Reforms Le Pors held midlevel positions in the government between 1969 and 1977.

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firm control over both the agenda and the interventions of individual ministers. Based on Mitterrand's evident suspicion of Communist motives and behavior, we believe that he and his top aides assume that Cabinet discussions will be reported back to PCF headquarters, that they steer the discussions with this in mind, and that they often reserve sensitive topics for other forums. Indeed, according to press accounts, Communist leaders have complained of being excluded from restricted Cabinet meetings on issues of prime importance to their ministries.<sup>5</sup>

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French officials involved in security and defense affairs assert that Communist ministers and their staffs have been effectively cut off from sensitive defense and intelligence information. Given his fundamental opposition to Soviet foreign policy goals, we believe Mitterrand has supported efforts by French security and military officials to minimize the risk of compromising such information. Furthermore, the Socialists have "covered" Communist appointees by placing Socialists in watchdog positions. For example, Socialists were named to the top managerial positions of "director general" under Le Pors, Ralite, and the head of the Paris Transit Authority. Mitterrand and Mauroy themselves reportedly have intervened to ensure that PCF access to politically sensitive positions is kept within tight bounds.



Notwithstanding efforts to insulate Communist functionaries, we believe that the appointment of Communists has enhanced opportunities for recruitment within the government bureaucracy by Soviet and other hostile intelligence services. We do not know whether the PCF is facilitating contacts between Communist civil servants and hostile intelligence services:



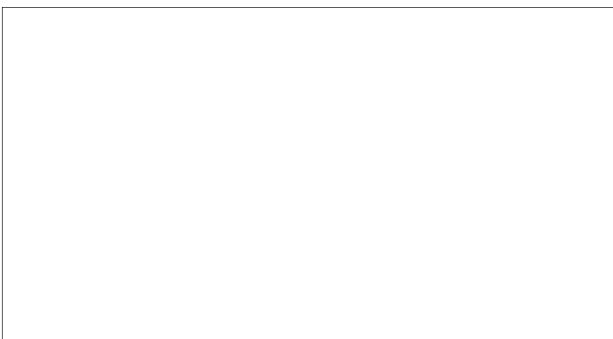
Still, we think it prudent to assume that some activity of this sort has occurred. It is also prudent to assume that Communist participation has increased the risk of compromise of confidential and proprietary information not directly related to national defense. For example, PCF access to economic planning documents obtained through Communist ministries might help the CGT to identify potential targets for increased influence in nationalized industries and might give PCF-run commercial enterprises useful insights for expanding their operations.

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As for Communist participation in the inner councils, press reports indicate that Cabinet meetings normally are highly structured, with the President maintaining



<sup>5</sup> A rightwing magazine last June published an alleged transcript of a radio telephone conversation between Ralite and Krasucki, which the magazine claimed had been intercepted by an amateur radio operator. The story was picked up by at least one respected centrist publication and the alleged transcript appears credible. According to the transcript, Ralite called Krasucki after learning from then Social Affairs Minister Questiaux that an interministerial meeting—to which Ralite had not been invited—probably would move to reduce CGT influence in the social security administration. Krasucki is said to have coached Ralite on how to oppose the move during a coming Cabinet meeting.

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[REDACTED]

In any case, we believe Communist participation in government is likely to yield dividends to the PCF in future years—whether or not it remains in the coalition—because of some institutional reforms engineered in the past 18 months. For example, Le Pors' plan to "democratize" the selection process of the elite National School of (Public) Administration (ENA) will open doors—albeit gradually—for increased Communist representation in ENA's student ranks. Similarly, certain provisions of Socialist-authored labor legislation will almost certainly increase CGT representation on labor-management councils of both state-owned and private enterprises.<sup>6</sup> Although the long-term effects of such institutional changes are difficult to predict, they represent, in our judgment, a net increase in the PCF's ability to make its voice heard in some important areas. [REDACTED]

#### **Little Impact on Foreign and Defense Policies**

We judge that Communist participation in the government has not significantly affected Mitterrand's foreign and defense policies. We believe that the broad national consensus on the need for a strong defense establishment and on the value of demonstrating French "independence" in international affairs, combined with Mitterrand's fundamental opposition to Soviet foreign policy goals, has been the determining factor. At the same time, Mitterrand's inclination

<sup>6</sup> Communist participation in the government has not been an unmitigated boon to the CGT, however. CGT membership has continued to drop, including in traditional bastions such as the nationalized automobile manufacturing firm, and the CGT was the big loser in nationwide labor-court elections in December. US Embassy reports and press accounts indicate that CGT's problems reflect, at least in part, discontent within its largely non-Communist rank and file over attempts by CGT leader—and PCF Politbureau member—Henri Krasucki to mix lukewarm endorsement of the Mitterrand government with harsh criticism of its economic and social policies. [REDACTED]

to take a firm stand on key East-West issues—for example, Afghanistan, Poland, and the Soviet SS-20s—and to support improved military cooperation within the Atlantic Alliance probably was reinforced by his desire to demonstrate both to France's allies and to the anti-Communist majority of the French electorate that any deal with the PCF would not involve concessions to the Communists on foreign policy. [REDACTED]

Some opposition figures, notably Gaullist leader Jacques Chirac, have charged that Mitterrand approved French participation in the Soviet gas pipeline to Western Europe last January because of PCF pressure, but we believe other considerations weighed far more heavily. Socialist support for the effort to secure alternative energy sources, reduce France's substantial and growing trade deficit with the USSR, protect jobs in pipeline-related industries, and pursue increased commercial relations with the USSR predates the coalition. Moreover, these goals are accepted by most political groups in France. Thus, while the PCF was quick to applaud the pipeline deal, major opposition figures such as former Prime Minister Barre—whose government had taken the first significant steps toward participation in the project—also endorsed it. [REDACTED]

Mitterrand has taken account of Communist sensitivities on some questions, but has made few substantive concessions. According to US Embassy reporting and press accounts, after the imposition of martial law in Poland, Mitterrand grew concerned that the anti-Soviet rhetoric of Socialist government and party officials might call the coalition with the Communists into question. In our judgment, Mitterrand's desire to avoid an early breakup of the coalition, particularly on the eve of cantonal elections last March, was a factor in his decision to impose restraint on his Socialist colleagues. Mitterrand probably was also concerned, however, that continued Socialist efforts to capitalize—at PCF expense—on domestic anger over Poland might eventually paint the government into a corner on the issue of economic sanctions against the USSR. [REDACTED]

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Direct Communist input on Mitterrand's activist Third World policies has, in our judgment, been marginal as well. Although the government has sought to improve relations with certain Communist- or Marxist-dominated states—including Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, and Angola—its actions, in our view, have stemmed principally from the Socialists' belief that they can compete with the Soviets for influence in these countries. Mitterrand's desire to compete with the PCF for support among the Communist electorate probably reinforced his early inclination to take highly visible actions, including the French-Mexican declaration on El Salvador in August 1981 (which recognized the insurgent alliance and called for negotiations between the government and the left) and the arms sale to Nicaragua in December 1981. In Africa and the Middle East, where vital French political, security, and economic interests are at stake, we believe even indirect PCF influence on Mitterrand's policies has been virtually nil. For example, the Mitterrand government has sought to maintain or strengthen close ties with many African leaders criticized as dictatorial by the Communists. In this same vein, it has attempted to follow an "evenhanded" approach in the Arab-Israeli conflict, ignoring Communist calls for a "pro-Palestinian" stance. [redacted]

Similarly, we believe the Communists have had little influence over French defense policy. Under Mitterrand, policy has closely conformed to key decisions—regarding, for example, the modernization of French strategic nuclear forces—made by Giscard. At the same time, according to press reports, Defense Minister Charles Hernu has blocked PCF efforts to encourage political activism within the military ranks. The Communists' role—a limited one—in encouraging Mitterrand's early expansionist economic policies probably did contribute indirectly to the government's recent decision to cut funds from the 1983 defense budget and to adopt a 1983 military budget in which expenditures probably will suffer a real decline for the first time in 14 years. [redacted]

**Continuing PCF Electoral Slump and Internal Strains** Marchais' attempts to use PCF participation in the government to mount an electoral salvage operation and to heal the party's internal wounds have been unsuccessful. Although the Communist leadership's

own miscalculations are largely to blame for the party's decline over recent years, Mitterrand's strategy, in our view, seriously compounded the PCF's problems. [redacted]

[redacted] the Communists had suffered a serious defeat in the cantonal elections. Party officials apparently were particularly disturbed because Socialists outscored Communists in nearly half of the 72 cities with populations of 30,000 or more that have been controlled by Communist administrations since 1977. [redacted]

Apparently fearful of another poor showing in the municipal elections next March, the PCF pushed hard to obtain PS support for Communist incumbent mayors in the first round of voting. The elections are of genuine importance to the PCF, given the ability of Communist mayors in some 231 small and medium-sized cities and towns to distribute patronage jobs, help fill the party's coffers, and extend preferential treatment to Communist-controlled businesses and labor unions. [redacted]

The PCF and PS agreed in late December to field common lists of candidates in most of the 231 cities with populations over 30,000. Although the PS backed off from earlier demands that the PCF support Socialist candidates in 18 cities now run by Communist mayors, the PCF still must face strong challenges by Socialist candidates in at least 11 Communist-run cities. (Some local PS federations oppose the compromise made by their national leadership and are threatening to run independent slates.) [redacted]

In any event, Communist participation in the government, in our judgment, has weakened the PCF's bargaining power by complicating its efforts to mobilize the Communist electorate. [redacted]

<sup>7</sup> Communist officials "donate" a portion of their municipal salaries to the party treasury. We believe these funds have become more important to the party because of the loss of 42 of its 86 seats in the National Assembly in 1981. [redacted]

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such participation makes it more difficult for the party to criticize Socialist policies and stake out independent positions. The government's shift last June toward economic belt-tightening measures evidently exacerbated the PCF's problems.

voters.<sup>8</sup>

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The PCF's electoral difficulties, in our view, are but one—albeit significant—indicator of its continuing internal problems. There is ample evidence that the party's decline over recent years—in terms of numbers and ideological cohesion of activists—has not been reversed:

At the same time, other officials and party veterans believe the party has been too accommodating toward Socialist policies. According to widely publicized reports, these critics fear the PCF's "working class" and "anti-imperialist" image will be sullied by collaboration with a government which allegedly harbors "social democratic" and "Atlanticist" tendencies. At least some members of this group, which apparently includes the most staunchly pro-Soviet elements of the party, hold that the PCF's long-term interests would be better served by a rapid return to the opposition where a "leaner" party of ideologically unified militants could eventually regain control of the left.

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- Despite inflated PCF claims of recent increases in party membership—officials claimed some 710,000 members last spring—knowledgeable French journalists calculate membership probably has leveled off at between 200,000 and 250,000. This represents a drop of about 300,000 members in the last four years.
- Sales of Communist newspapers and periodicals—a good indicator of party activist morale—are down since the Socialist victories last year.

This disarray is also reflected in broadly based internal criticism of the current party leadership—and particularly of Marchais. Although factionalism is not a new phenomenon in the PCF, we believe Communist participation in the government has exacerbated the problem.

The leadership's decision to scuttle the alliance with the Socialists in 1977 and its behind-the-scenes efforts to ensure the reelection of President Giscard last year have contributed to disaffection among militants and

On the other hand, Communist participation in the government has not, in our judgment, significantly enhanced the PCF's prestige among non-Communists. Although opinion polls and press accounts indicate the Communist ministers—particularly Fiterman—have had some success in portraying themselves as hard-working and loyal coalition members, most non-Communists apparently remain fundamentally suspicious of PCF motives. For example, according to a recent poll, 64 percent of French voters would like to see the PCF suffer an overall loss of influence in the municipal elections, while 17 percent would favor increased influence. Meanwhile, Communist leader Marchais continues to score at or near the bottom of political preference polls.

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#### Outlook for the Preelection Period

We think the Socialist shift in economic policy will increase strains between the Socialists and Communists in coming weeks and months. Press reports

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indicate that the Mitterrand government has followed up its wage and price freeze, which expired on 31 October, with a long-term program of relative budgetary restraint and only a phased withdrawal through 1983 of price and wage controls. This program already has resulted in a real decrease in workers' purchasing power in 1982—a situation termed “unacceptable” by PCF leaders. [REDACTED]

The Communist leadership will in our view increasingly rely on what prominent French political commentators have called its “dual strategy” toward the Socialists. While publicly proclaiming their “solidarity” with the government, PCF leaders will attempt to distance themselves further from certain unpopular Socialist policies. For example, PCF and CGT officials recently have called for imposing heavier tax burdens on private corporations and higher income groups, increasing the real wages of workers (particularly those receiving the minimum wage), restoring cutbacks in transfer payments to lower income groups, and adopting new protectionist measures. [REDACTED]

We believe that the PCF will attempt to use the CGT to force some concessions on domestic policy, but will be careful not to overplay its hand. The PCF must be concerned with possible resistance to “political strikes” among the largely non-Communist CGT rank and file, as well as the risk to its ministerial posts.

[REDACTED]

Socialist and Communist leaders probably will continue to clash on the issue of joint electoral lists. Some national PS leaders—and perhaps Mitterrand—may be inclined to offer concessions on common lists to the Communists, both to obtain their cooperation on the labor front and to obtain Communist support for

Socialist candidates in certain hotly contested districts. Nevertheless, resistance from local PS leaders will limit the national leadership's room for compromise. [REDACTED]

Although the coalition stands a good chance of limping along until the municipal elections, there remains a possibility—albeit slight—that events could force an earlier breakup. For example, unexpectedly deep opposition to Socialist economic policies among the CGT rank and file could push CGT leader Krasucki to harden his stand again and provoke a clear test of wills between the PCF leadership and the government. Alternatively, a sharp drop in the government's popularity might tempt some Communist leaders to break with the Socialists and try to win ground on the left before the elections. [REDACTED]

#### Long-Term Prospects for the Coalition

Assuming the coalition does hold together through the municipal elections, prospects are bleak in our judgment for maintaining it much longer. Strains are likely to come from several directions.

- Recent polls indicate that while the Socialists will not repeat their electoral successes of 1981, the Communists also have little hope of staging a significant electoral comeback. We believe a poor Communist showing—combined with continuing Socialist-Communist frictions over domestic and foreign policies—could decisively undercut the Communist leadership's ability to defend participation in the government. Critics of such participation could pick up an argument used publicly by Marchais during the last Communist party congress to explain the PCF's electoral setbacks in 1981—that any alliance with the Socialists carried the risk of “confusing” and “demobilizing” the Communist electorate.
- The Socialists will be looking ahead to parliamentary elections in 1986. A decline in support among moderate “swing” voters—many of whom oppose the coalition with the Communists—would spell a

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Socialist defeat at the hands of the center right. Thus we believe the Socialists will be strongly tempted to end the coalition and push through a modified proportional representation system. According to press accounts, some Socialist leaders—perhaps including Mitterrand—believe the Socialists could then become the keystone of future coalitions even if they lost their absolute majority in the National Assembly. Mitterrand probably would try, however, to maneuver the Communists into withdrawing from the coalition—for example, by rejecting renewed Communist demands for a rapid return to expansionist economic policies—rather than dismiss them outright.

- The Socialists probably will calculate that their policies stand a good chance of winning continued support from a large number of formerly Communist voters. The PCF's continuing support for Soviet foreign policy positions—support which might increase if certain PCF officials hostile to Communist participation in the government gained the upper hand in the party—probably would help the Socialists win the lion's share of wavering Communist voters. [REDACTED]

If these strains lead to a Socialist break with the Communists, we think chances would increase for some cooperation between the Socialists and elements of the center-right opposition. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Although leftwing Socialists probably would oppose even a limited "tilt" toward the center, few probably would go so far as to break with their party leadership. [REDACTED]

In our view, it is less likely that Mitterrand and the Communist leadership would respond to an overall leftist defeat in the municipal elections by attempting to salvage the coalition. Still, both sides might calculate that division of the left would increase the possibility of a center-right victory in the next parliamentary elections, perhaps putting serious pressure on Mitterrand to resign before his term ends in 1988. We believe, however, based on the PCF record in the coalition and on the fundamental differences between

Mitterrand and the Communist leadership, that the two sides could not achieve the compromises necessary to preserve their alliance until 1986. [REDACTED]

A breakup of the Socialist-Communist coalition probably would not produce drastic changes in French domestic or foreign policy. In our judgment Mitterrand and his top Socialist advisers would continue to pursue their long-term vision for a "socialist" France with much the same mixture of ideology and pragmatism that has emerged during their first 18 months in power. Although the PCF's departure from the government would afford Mitterrand some additional room for maneuver toward the center, we believe he would try to avoid what he views as a major mistake of previous Socialist governments: the appearance of having sacrificed leftist principles in what some of his supporters would view as a "deal" with the right. Moreover, even out of government the PCF would retain some leverage over domestic policy choices through the CGT. [REDACTED]

The coalition's demise probably would not result in a mass exodus of PCF members from government positions obtained under the Communist ministers. Although party members assigned to "political" posts—for example, in the cabinets of Communist ministers and in nationalized industries—probably would be forced out, most Communist civil servants probably would be allowed to stay. While it is difficult to predict whether these civil servants—whose party affiliation may or may not be known to their government colleagues—eventually could exert more influence over major government policies than has been the case during Communist participation in the coalition, they certainly would constitute a pro-PCF lobby in some government administrations and would continue their efforts to "tilt" government policies—particularly in the domestic arena—to the left. In addition, once outside the coalition, the PCF might become more willing to risk illegal or questionable activities by these Communist functionaries. [REDACTED]

On the other hand, we speculate that the PCF's shrinking electoral base (and resulting losses in numbers of elected officials at all levels), combined with its

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continuing internal strains, eventually could weaken the ability of the Communists to sustain or exploit any new influence within the governmental machinery. It should be recalled that the undeniable gains which accrued to the Communists from participation in the government in 1945-47 were consolidated over a 10-year period when the PCF was the dominant force on the left—with upwards of 25 percent of the electorate—and when the CGT's grip on French labor was at or near its historic high. [REDACTED]

#### **Implications for the United States**

Mitterrand's qualified success in helping to weaken PCF influence in the French left serves US interests by further isolating the one major party in French politics which does not fundamentally support Western democratic values or maintenance of a significant contribution to Western collective defense. On the other hand, as part of his long-term strategy to attract increasing numbers of Communist voters to the Socialist ranks, Mitterrand adopted domestic policies during the first year of his administration which exacerbated underlying French economic difficulties, raised the level of protectionism, and led to some cutbacks in defense spending. [REDACTED]

In our view, Communist participation in the government has had only marginal impact on French foreign policies that directly affect US interests. The adversarial relationship between Communists and Socialists probably reinforced Mitterrand's personal inclination to take a firm public stand on East-West political security issues including Poland, Afghanistan, and INF modernization. Mitterrand has sought to maintain and in some cases broaden bilateral security arrangements with the United States despite his domestic deal with the Communists. At the same time, French criticism of certain US policies involving Third World and East-West economic issues—for example, the Soviet gas pipeline to Western Europe—may have become a little more shrill because of Mitterrand's apparent desire to demonstrate his defense of French “independence” to the Communist electorate. It should be recalled, however, that such criticisms have many precedents in Gaullist rhetoric and strike a responsive chord across a broad spectrum of the French electorate. [REDACTED]

The decision by the United States not to make a major issue of Mitterrand's appointment of Communist ministers averted a potentially serious reaction from public opinion in France and elsewhere. At the same time, discreet expressions of concern by the United States and others following the appointments probably reinforced Mitterrand's determination to limit the access of Communist ministers and their appointees to sensitive foreign policy and defense-related information. [REDACTED]

In our judgment, the PCF's participation in the French Government has not significantly improved the prospects for Communist participation in other major West European governments. We accept the view of US embassies in Western Europe that the question of eventual Communist participation will be decided on the basis of each country's peculiar internal situation. [REDACTED]

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